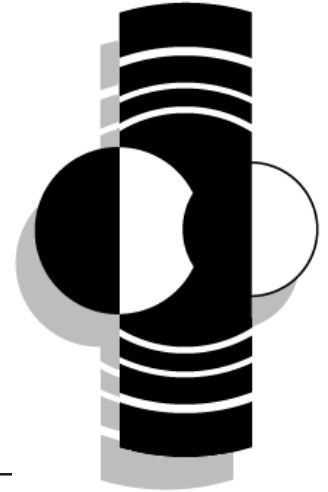


LPSC: 30 YEARS AT A GLANCE

This year's Lunar and Planetary Science Conference marked the 30th anniversary of the conference that had its origins as a controlled report to NASA on the first lunar samples returned to Earth by Apollo 11. In the following pages, we present a retrospective of the conference, including photographs from the past 30 years and insights from LPI scientists and staff members David Black, Paul Spudis, Graham Ryder, LeBecca Simmons, and Pam Thompson. The quotations were taken from an informal roundtable discussion on the history and origins of the conference. The 30th LPSC, held at Johnson Space Center and the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston, March 15–19, 1999, again attracted a record-breaking number of abstracts and attendees. The official count tallied 1052 abstracts submitted and 1071 people attending the conference.



“The first meeting was at the Albert Thomas Convention Center. I stayed in the Old Rice Hotel. It was cold, a blue norther had come through. We’re standing in about 30 degrees, we had the windows closed, and we had towels up against the windows. It was freezing. When I came back for the 20th, the conference had taken on this wide and diverse topical nature, with numerous sessions instead of just one. There were obviously changes in the faces — although some of the same faces were there, — but it was the structure of the meeting that changed so much.”

— David Black, LPI Director, who attended the first conference as a graduate student and then did not attend again for 20 years



Participants register at the 1974 conference in the lobby of Building 1 at JSC.

“The conference started out as a way to embargo the results of lunar sample stuff — so no one would scoop anyone else. And from that it evolved into a program review meeting, where people would come and say ‘OK, during the past year, here’s what I did with my grant money.’ And from that it evolved into the place where all the major results in our business are reported. A lot of people go to DPS, and a lot of people go to the AGU, and to GSA. This is the one meeting where I think everyone goes who’s interested in planetary science and counts on what they need to know about what’s new in the business.”

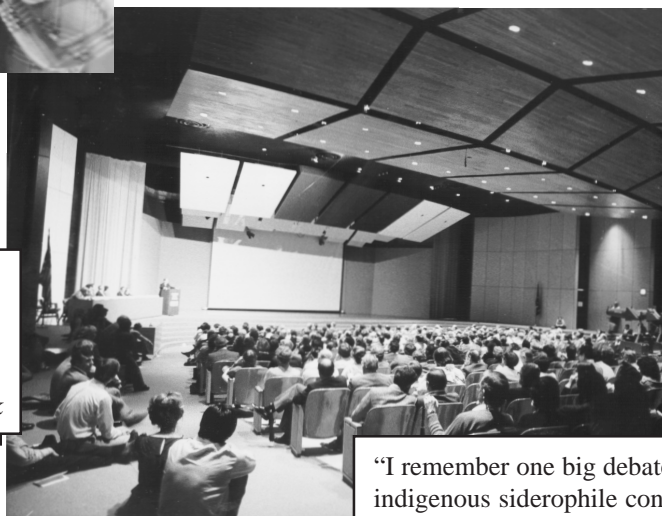
—Paul Spudis, who first attended in 1977

“The very first one was an incredibly exciting time, because it was all about Apollo.”

—David Black

“If you think about it, some of the people presenting now at the meetings weren’t even born when Apollo first landed on the Moon.”

—LeBecca Simmons



A speaker attracts a large crowd in Building 2 during the 1983 conference.

“I remember one big debate about the indigenous siderophile content of the Moon. The most drag-down, knock-out fights can be over the most trivial things. It was a packed Building 2 auditorium.”

—Paul Spudis

“In my lifetime, the one (science presentation at LPSC) that really sticks out is when we first got the *Venera* orbital stuff of Venus. The only thing of Venus before was this very low-resolution *Pioneer* data — and you just saw bumps on a globe — it wasn’t very impressive. I remember when the Russians had these first radar pictures, and that was only the northern third of the planet, and that was just an incredible high-energy conference, because it was literally like seeing a planet we had never seen before.”

Paul Spudis



*The 1984 conference was marked by the release of *Venera* Orbital data.*



Robert Clayton displays his collection of LPSC badges from past conferences as Mike Duke looks on.

Participants celebrated the conference's 20th anniversary in 1989.



"When you want to look at the science highlights (of the conference), I say pick up any planetary science textbook because virtually anything in that was first reported at this conference."
— Paul Spudis

"At the 20th LPSC Anniversary Banquet, Robert Clayton of University of Chicago arrived wearing every badge he had been issued at the 20 conferences he had attended. He had each badge attached in order by year to his 20th LPSC conference badge, and the train of badges reached from his shoulder to the floor. Everyone seemed to enjoy such a distinguished member of the community making a sentimental public display of his participation in the conferences."

— LeBecca Simmons, Conference Coordinator



The West Mansion was last used for LPSC open house activities in 1991.

"A lot of us have used this format to publish ideas that for some reason or another we either didn't want to develop more fully or we didn't want to go through the hassle of a review. I always thought the benefits outweighed the downside."

— Paul Spudis



Attendees line up to register at the West Mansion during the 1991 conference.

"Apollo was way too hurried. Now we have time to step back and put everything into a big picture."

— Graham Ryder, who has attended every conference since 1978, save the Ninth



Pam (Jones) Solomon, former LPSC Conference Administrator, organizes events for the 1991 Chili Cookoff.

"Of all the meetings I go to, this one's the best bargain. What is it, \$50? Compare that to some of these other \$200 meetings."

— Paul Spudis

"If you look at the covers of the programs, the fourth conference had six images of the Apollo lunar landing sites; the next one had solar system objects, Mars and Mercury, and that was virtually the beginning of the transition."

— Paul Spudis



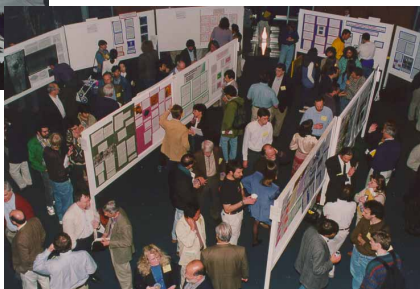
Bob Clayton, Gene Shoemaker, and George Wetherill cut the 25th anniversary cake, with David Black and Doug Blanchard looking on.

“Nobody wants to change the scope or tradition of the conference after 30 years. We even get feedback if we change the colors of the products from the traditional black and yellow colors.”

— LeBecca Simmons

“As long as missions are flown and data comes back, this conference will be here.”

—Paul Spudis



The new LPI facility housed the conference poster sessions for several years.



An oral session in Room 104 of the Gilruth Center attracts a large number of listeners during the 1994 conference.

“The LPSC abstracts are unique in that they’re long enough to actually say something.”

— Graham Ryder

LPSC THROUGH THE YEARS

- The first conference, known as the Apollo 11 Lunar Science Conference, was held January 5–8, 1970, six months after *Apollo 11* returned the first samples from the Moon.
- Approximately 240 abstracts were published in the abstract volume for the second conference, the 1971 Lunar Science Conference, held January 11–14, 1971, at the Albert Thomas Convention and Exhibit Center.
- No record of attendance for the first conference exists, although estimates for attendance hover around 1000.
- The third LPSC was held in January 1972. Approximately 375 preliminary abstracts were printed for distribution to conference participants.
- The conference was moved to the Johnson Space Center for the 4th Lunar Science Conference. The meeting attracted 300 abstracts and 700 attendees.
- The 10th conference (another celebrated anniversary year) drew 493 abstracts and 745 attendees.
- Until 1973, the conference was held in January. The fourth conference was moved to March, and it has been held in the middle of that month ever since.
- There were 643 abstracts submitted and 729 attendees for the 20th LPSC.
- There were 1052 abstracts submitted and 1071 attendees for the 30th LPSC.
- Until 1977, the conference was known as the Lunar Science Conference and was sponsored by the Lunar Science Institute and NASA Johnson Space Center. In 1978 the conference became the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference, to reflect the broadening range of topics covered at the conference, and the Institute changed its name to the Lunar and Planetary Institute.
- The logo now used by the Lunar and Planetary Institute as its trademark was originally developed by NASA artist Boyd Mounce as the LPSC conference logo. LPI later obtained permission to use the logo for the Institute.
- The *Proceedings of the Lunar and Planetary Science Conference*, the postmeeting, refereed publication associated with the conference, was last published in 1992. Through the years, the book had been published by Pergamon, Cambridge, and the American Geophysical Union. Only a *Proceedings* volume (with no abstract volume) was published for the first Apollo 11 conference.
- The LPSC abstract volume was last published in hard-copy form for mass distribution in 1997, the same year that the electronic CD-ROM abstract volume was introduced. The cumbersome abstract volume set, which had become known as the “Yellow Peril” over the years, expanded to two volumes in 1988, and had grown to three volumes by 1994.
- The James Marion West Mansion, built in 1930 and renovated in 1969, housed the Lunar and Planetary Institute through 1991 and was used for conference-related activities until the Institute relocated to its present building. ☉